



Tools to Confront Power with Power

February 28, 2013

Matthew Goldstein
Chancellor
City University of New York
535 E. 80th Street, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10075

Dear Chancellor Goldstein:

We are writing you with regard to a very serious issue that the administration of CUNY will be dealing with this year.

It has come to our attention that The Coca-Cola Company is seeking a CUNY-wide exclusive beverage contract. Given Coca-Cola's horrendous history and current record of racial discrimination, human rights abuses and environmental degradation, we hope you will deny Coca-Cola any such opportunity on CUNY campuses.

Right here in the New York City-Metro area, The Coca-Cola Company is currently embroiled in racial discrimination cases at two local bottling plants, where workers, dubbed The Coke 16, have suffered from biased work assignments, unfair discipline and retaliation and a caustic work environment. Coca-Cola's criminal rap sheet is long and I would urge you to visit www.StopCokeDiscrimination.org for detailed information about Coca-Cola's record of racial discrimination and the conditions under which minority Coke workers must work.

Those of us who signed this letter have been terminated by The Coca-Cola Company for standing up to the constant abuse that we and other black and Latino workers endured for too long. We are attaching a leaflet, side 1 entitled: "Coca-Cola's Work Places Called 'Cesspools of Racial Discrimination' " and side 2 entitled: "Coca-Cola Victims Tell Their Stories & Fight Back." This flyer highlights the harmful impact that racial discrimination has had on us and our families.

We are aware that the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY is on record along with New York State United Teachers and the United Federation of Teachers to ban all Coke beverages from their union's facilities and functions.

These teachers' unions took this action because of the well-documented evidence that the Company has gone to extreme measures to hide and cover-up its complicity in the torture and murder of union leaders at their bottling plants in Colombia, which continues to this day.

Since taking that action, lawsuits have been filed charging Coke and its operations in Guatemala with complicity in murder, attempted murder and gang rape of family members of union leaders in efforts to stop their union activities. And Human Rights Watch and an expose of Coca-Cola on a nationally-televised documentary in the UK highlighted Coca-Cola's use of illegal child labor in the dangerous harvesting of sugar cane in El Salvador. In India, the Company has devastated entire communities by depleting scarce water resources. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

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Coca-Cola's dismal record on human rights has been well-documented in the website, www.KillerCoke.org, and in numerous publications, television news programs, books like "Belching Out the Devil" by Mark Thomas and "The Coke Machine" by Michael Blanding and documentary films like "The Coca-Cola Case" which premiered in 2010 despite the threats of lawsuits from The Coca-Cola Company.

A new film, "[Coca-Cola et la formule secrète](#) (Coca-Cola and the Secret Formula), premiered on French national television on January 8, as well as in Belgium and Switzerland. The film highlights a meeting of The Coke 16 in New York. Two million people watched the film in France — the largest audience during the past year at that hour.

As a result of Coca-Cola's human rights violations, colleges and universities have taken the lead in demanding justice. As a result of protests, large local campuses like Rutgers and SUNY Stony Brook took action to end their exclusive beverage contracts with Coca-Cola. Dozens of other campuses facing protests, such as DePaul and the University of California, Berkeley, have also ended exclusive contracts and cut ties with The Coca-Cola Company. At CUNY, CUNY School of Law, Queensborough Community College and CUNY's Joseph A. Murphy Institute ended their ties with Coke and removed vending machines and fountain service.

We hope you, the chancellor of CUNY, will "take a leadership role in the immediate community and across the nation," as the Mission Statement of The City College of New York states, and block any attempt by Coca-Cola to gain a beverage contract with CUNY.

Your leadership on this will inspire the 540,000 students attending CUNY schools and send a strong message about the values of the CUNY community, standing for human rights and dignity.

In order to get our story out to all of CUNY's faculty, staff and students, we are being represented by [Corporate Campaign, Inc.](#)

We would like you to reply to us at info@corporatcampaign.org and let us know what your position is regarding Coca-Cola's participation in any process to secure a CUNY-wide exclusive contract. Also, please contact Corporate Campaign if you have any questions or would like to meet.

Respectfully,

Yvette Butler

Freddy Estrada

Oral Forbes

Sandra Walker

Ian Hoffmann, Organizer
Corporate Campaign, Inc.
John Jay College Alumnus (AS '06, BA '09)

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